

CREATING A TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR
FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

A CREATIVE PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

Title: Creating a Workshop on Transition to College for First Generation College

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The purpose of this study was to assist in the transition from high school to college for first-generation college students by creating a five-week program to educate these students on expectations of their collegiate experience. Additionally this project included workshops on services and opportunities available such as financial aid and campus life. The goal of this project was to decrease institutional departure of first-generation college students by increasing their knowledge of collegiate life. First-generation college students are an increasingly large population of students on college and university campuses. Because of that, faculty and staff need to meet the needs of these students by aiding in their transition to college. Through this workshop series, and the additional faculty mentorship program, students will be more prepared to navigate their collegiate experience, as well as have an increased understanding of the services and departments that are available to assist them.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Presented in chapter one is an overview of a creative project, which addresses the needs of first-generation college students by creating a five-week program of workshops. The curriculum included provides resources to aid in the education of first-generation college students in their transition from high school to college. The program will include sessions on majors, campus services, and general expectations. Also provided is a statement of purpose, significance of the creative project, definition of terms, and an organization of the paper.

Introduction

Persistence to graduation, or the failure to do so, has been one of the most studied experiences of higher education. First-generation college students are an emerging subpopulation on the collegiate campus, and show no signs of leveling off in the future. Because of the increasing presence of these students, a need for increased services for first-generation students exists. Much of this research includes a focus on the path to persistence for first-generation college students and how it differs from traditional students (Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996). These differences begin before students even step foot on college campuses, so educating students about what to expect from their collegiate experience would be of great benefit to first-

generation college students. The intent of this creative project was to develop a five-week workshop to help first-generation college students increase their knowledge and expectations of college.

The shape of college and university campuses has shifted dramatically over the past 30 years. An increase in accessibility during this time period altered the demographic populations to a more diverse and inclusive group of students. This increase in accessibility also increased the number of students who were the first in their family to attend college, which is past 40% of the student population (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). These first-generation college students were shown to be at a significant disadvantage when compared to their traditional college-going peers in both pre-college and during-college assessments (Padgett, Johnson, & Pascarella, 2012; Terenzini, et al., 1996). These disadvantages included limited knowledge of higher education expectations and experiences, which inhibited the student's ability to thrive while attending a college or university. University faculty and staff should be knowledgeable of the unique circumstances and challenges first-generation students face in order to better equip their students with the necessary resources and information to reach degree obtainment. Early intervention programs could assist these students.

A major concern for colleges and universities has been on the increased amount of time it is taking students to graduate, as well as the large number of students who do not make it to graduation. Tinto (1975) developed a Theory of Institutional Departure that outlined the factors assisting students to persist to graduation. Research has shown that first-generation college students are less likely to obtain a degree, and will take more time to complete their degrees when compared to their traditional peers. By educating

first-generation college students about resources that are available to them, they would be able to have greater sense of their collegiate expectations.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to assist in the transition from high school to college for first-generation college students by creating a five-week program to educate these students on expectations of their collegiate experience. Additionally this project included workshops on services and opportunities available such as financial aid and campus life. The goal of this project is to decrease institutional departure of first-generation college students by increasing their knowledge of collegiate life.

Significance of the Creative Project

This creative project sought to allow first-generation college students to combat the factors affecting persistence to graduation. First-generation college students are at a significant disadvantage when compared to their traditional peers, and college can be an overwhelming and challenging time for these students. While there are issues all students must face during their college experience, first-generation college students appear less equipped to persist through to graduation.

The goal of the project was to create a series of workshops that would assist first-generation college students by increasing their knowledge about college. This program will aid in the development of first-generation college students during their college experience, with the intent to decrease the number of first-generation college students departing the institution and increase the amount of first-generation college students that are successfully obtaining degrees.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for this study.

Departure/Dropout – The act of leaving an institution of higher education willingly, and is not due to academic failure (Tinto, 1975).

First-Generation College Student – This term referred to students who were the first in their family to obtain a degree, and excluded those students who had a parent or parents who had attended college without obtaining degree completion.

Persistence – The act of remaining at an institution of higher education.

Organization of the Project

The following study is divided into four separate chapters. Chapter Two consists of a review of literature related to Tinto's theory of Institutional Departure, first-generation college students, and persistence to graduation. Chapter Three includes a description of both the design and methodology of the project as it is applied to a creative project. Program structure and implementation are included in Chapter Four. A list of references and appendices are provided at the end of the paper.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Summary of the Project

This creative project focused on first-generation college students by developing a program to aid in the transition to college. The prepared literature is divided into three sections. The first section is a review of the theory of Institutional Departure authored by Vincent Tinto. Next are a description of first-generation college students, and a review of their demographics, pre-college characteristics, and college experiences. The final section presents research on the factors that affect the persistence to graduation.

College Retention

Vincent Tinto (1975) developed the theory of Institutional Departure, that sought to inform how and why students exit colleges and universities. Tinto felt there was a “lack of attention” given to development of a persistence model, and cited administrative policy decisions as one of the reasons for needing increased understanding of student departure. Tinto (1993) suggests in order for students to persist and develop they must move through three separate stages and be integrated academically and socially into the institution. Tinto used a sociological theory by David Durkheim to inform his own work. “Developed from Durkheim's theory of suicide, the schema makes comparisons between committing suicide and leaving school because of a lack of integration into a social structure (Racchini, 2005, p. 48).

The first stage of Tinto's (1975) theory involves separation. In order for students to be successful they needed to separate themselves from their former cultures (e.g., home, high school, relationships, etc.). Separation enabled the student to develop their own ideals and belief systems without the influence of their former culture or peers. Elkins, Braxton, and James (2000) found support for the separation phase of Tinto's model and called for future studies to support the validity of the transition and incorporation stages. Departure from the institution would likely occur during this phase if students were unable to separate themselves from former cultures.

The second stage of Tinto's (1975) theory referred to the transition period during student's first year of college. During this time students still had not affirmed their ties to their new social and academic cultures of their college or university, while they simultaneously loosened their attachments to their pre-college environments. Many students in this stage were still trying to articulate their own values and sense of identity while attempting to define their collegiate experience and further remove themselves from the cultures of their past.

For many students, how well they coped with the changes of their transition defined whether or not they remained in the institution. Tinto (1988), "Beside the obvious role of personality, differences in individual coping skills and in educational goals and commitments have much to do with individual responses to the stresses of separation and transition" (p. 444). Many institutions of higher education implemented a diverse range of programming to aid in the transition of first-year students. This programming included summer orientation programs, summer bridge programs, early engagement opportunities, and freshmen transition classes. There are many other

examples of programming that unintentionally aids in the transition of freshmen. An example of this was seen in living-learning communities. Living-learning communities provide the student with social and academic engagement opportunities that allow them to connect with both their peers and the academic culture of the institution (Tinto, 1975). Dropout was likely to occur in the transition phase if an individual student did not have proper coping skills. The ability to deal with conflicting personal values and beliefs while developing social ties increased the chance of persisting.

The final stage in Tinto's model is incorporation into the college community. The student sought alignment their values and beliefs with those of their peers at college or university, and have relinquished their prior cultural norms (Tinto, 1988). Integration referred to not only the academic integration experiences of the student, but social integrations as well.

Social integration, as it pertains to persistence in college, seems, then, not to imply absolute or even wide-ranging congruence with the prevailing social climate of the institution as much as it does the development, through friendship associations, of sufficient congruency with some part of the social system of the college—thus, the notion of subcultures within colleges and their role in providing modes of social integration into the collegiate social system. (Tinto, 1975, pp. 107-108)

Student involvement with faculty and staff is important to developing incorporation into the university. While many institutions developed programming or housed organizations that assisted in the outreach to new students, “Unfortunately, such programs do not always reach out to all new students; indeed, they do so infrequently” (Tinto, 1988, p.

446), therefore many students initiate their own social interactions. Additionally, other students may choose to not identify with the campus culture, which in some cases lead to departure. Dropout during this phase occurs because the student fails to make strong academic and social connections, or if they fail to be comfortable with new beliefs and ideologies that students develop during college.

While Vincent Tinto's theory of student departure is widely accepted, it is not without criticism (Elkins, et al., 2000). One of the most commonly cited issues with Tinto's model of departure is that it is not all components of the model are empirically grounded (Berger & Lyon, 2005; Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000; Elkins, et al., 2000). Kember (1989) pointed out the reservations with using Tinto's model for distance education students, stating "The Tinto model was derived for full-time education by face-to-face teaching of students who recently left school and stresses the importance of social and intellectual involvement within an institution upon student behaviour" (p. 284). Tinto's model was heavily criticized by Tierney (1992, 1999), who argued the "rites of passage" taken from Durkheim's suicide model does not apply to student persistence, and further, that the model as a whole is not applicable to minority students.

First-Generation College Students

Increased accessibility to American higher education institutions, attributed to reformatory policy changes since the 1970's, considerably changed the demographics of the campus setting. For the first time many students were able to pursue postsecondary education where their parents had not. According to Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998), 43% of students entering any form of higher education were first-generation college students. There is limited literature on the subject of first-generation college students.

Much of the research on first-generation college students centers around three main areas (Terenzini et al., 1996). The focus of researchers is on how first-generation college students differ from their traditional peers in pre-college expectations and preparation, how the experiences of first-generation college students and traditional students differ during transition, and whether first-generation students could expect different college experiences and paths to persistence when compared to their traditional peers. “Unfortunately, most research to date has been focused on these students once they arrive at college rather than on factors that influence their decision making before they arrive at college or decide to not attend” (Gibbons & Borders, 2010, p. 195).

Pre-College Characteristics

Demographic differences. “In large part, first-generation students’ lower persistence and graduation rates, and their lower scores on standardized assessment measures, are the result of differences in the precollege characteristics of first- and second-generation students” (Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 277). First-generation college students are a diverse population, and several demographic characteristics were identified for first-generation college students (Ishitani, 2006; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; Terenzini, et al., 1996). Multiple studies noted that the first-generation student population was more likely to consist of individuals who were older, married, from a lower financial status, and more likely to have children or other dependents (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Terenzini, et al., 1996). Gibbons and Borders (2010) noted Hispanic students were more likely to have a first-generation college student status. Similar results were found by Terenzini, et al. (1996), who also noted that first-generation college students were also more likely to be women.

Cognitive differences. While first-generation college students and their traditional peers are equally as likely to need remedial courses upon entering college (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998), there were noted cognitive disadvantages for the first-generation college student population. Gibbons and Borders (2010) conducted a study on potential first-generation college students while they were in the seventh grade. Of the 272 students from various schools that were tested, they found that the potential first-generation college student population was much less likely to be in a higher-level math course. In a study by Terenzini, et al. (1996), 2,685 students were tested on pre-college math and reading abilities; the researchers discovered that “in both instances, traditional students scored higher than first generation students” (p. 10). The authors also noted that first-generation college students scored lower in critical thinking abilities.

Collegiate expectations differences. Much of what was understood about first-generation college students centers on their expectations about attending postsecondary education. There are many perceived barriers to access to higher education by Pre First-Generation College Students (PFGCS).

PFGCS reported a higher number of perceived barriers, and specific themes emerged. Whereas non-PFGCSs perceived only barriers related to finances and school stress, PFGCSs identified finances, family issues, racial/ethnic discrimination, lack of college-educated role models, an lack of preparation and/or desire as perceived barriers to college going. (Gibbons & Borders, 2010, p. 204)

Additionally, this study also found that first-generation students perceived fewer positive outcomes as a result of college attendance. Terenzini, et al. (1996) reported similar

results. Their study showed lower degree aspirations, less reported encouragement to seek educational opportunities past high school, less time spent socializing with high school teachers, and an expected need to take longer to receive their degree.

During College

“The comparative differences between first-generation students and non-first generation students continue upon enrollment in college” (Padgett et al., 2012, p. 244). When compared to their peers who had at least one parent with some college experiences, first-generation students were at a significant disadvantage across cognitive and psychosocial measures. They also concluded that first-generation students were not prepared to successfully interact with faculty, which resulted in lower results for cognitive and psychosocial measures. Woosley and Shepler (2011) pointed out the lower retention rates of first-generation college students, and examined the effects of early integration experiences for first-generation college students, which were found to have positive influences on persistence decisions.

First-generation college students were more likely to take a longer path through their undergraduate course work (Ishitani, 2006; Pascarella, et al., 2004). Pascarella, et al. (2004) also found that first-generation college students completed less credit hours, worked more hours during their collegiate experience, and were less likely to live in campus housing. The authors stated, “moreover, the added work responsibilities of first-generation students may in part explain the fact that, despite a lighter academic load, first-generation students had significantly lower cumulative grades than similar students whose parents were both college graduates” (pp. 276-277). This possibly also accounted for the discrepancy in involvement experiences between first-generation college students

and their traditional peers. First-generation college students are less engaged, but perceive more gains than their traditional peers from involvement experiences (Pascarella, et al., 2004; Pike & Kuh, 2005).

Persistence to Graduation

“Student persistence is the product of a longitudinal process of varied lengths in student’s lives” (Nora, Barlow, & Crisp, 2005, p. 129). Persistence and retention are affected by a number of factors and policies. When comparing socioeconomic statuses, it was found that “students from high socioeconomic backgrounds appear to have a relative advantage over students from the lowest socioeconomic levels for most of the pathways to a college degree” (Cabrera, Burkum, & La Nasa, 2005, p. 161). In a comparison of gender differences for six-year persistence, females persist at a higher rate than males (Nora, et al., 2005). According to Sideridis and Kaplan (2011), students who were concerned with success in their academic behavior were more likely to persist longer.

When college students are satisfied with their college experience, they tend to persist toward graduation. Students with higher levels of self-efficacy tended to persist to graduation at higher levels (Dewitz & Walsh, 2002; Dewitz, Woosley, & Walsh, 2009). Suhre, Jansen, and Harskamp (2007) found that increase in satisfaction among a student’s degree program increased study motivation and behavior, and thus improved chances of persistence. Living-learning communities were also shown to be linked to increased satisfaction (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Woosley and Miller (2009) examined the effects of integration and institutional commitment, and found it to positively impact retention and grade point average.

Financial aid was another factor that influenced persistence to graduation (Bettinger, 2012; Cabrera, Nora, & Castenada, 1992; Nora, Barlow, & Crisp, 2006). Chen and St. John (2011) noted the importance of state funding, and it's positive associations with persistence. Additionally, Bettinger (2012) stated "Because of the increased concern with college retention, recent federal and state financial aid policies (e.g., Federal Academic Competitiveness Grants) have specifically aimed at improving retention" (p. 157).

Summary

Tinto's (1975) theory of Institutional Departure provided a model to describe how students persist through college. The path to successful persistence involved students moving through separate stages, including separation from previous cultures, transitioning to the cultural norms of their institution of higher education, and finally incorporating the values and beliefs of their institution. If a student failed to relinquish their previous norms or develop consistent beliefs, drop out was likely to occur.

Almost half of the students entering higher education are first-generation college students (Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). First-generation college students were found to differ from their traditional peers in pre-college characteristics (e.g., developmentally, cognitively, etc.). Research indicates these differences are distinct (Pascarella, et al., 2004; Terenzini, et al., 1996). During college, first-generation college students are less likely to persist through college, and more likely to take a longer path to graduation (Pascarella, et al., 2004).

There is still much research to be done over the factors affecting first-generation college student's path to persistence. Previous research shows first-generation college

students vary from their traditional peers, but most research conducted deals with pre-college characteristics as opposed to the barriers facing these students during their college going years. This previous research shows first-generation college students are facing unique set of barriers on their path to persistence.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The third chapter outlines the methodology used in a creative project that is aimed at educating first-generation college students about collegiate life. Included in this chapter is a statement of purpose, methodology of the project, the overall design of the creative project, and a summary.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to assist in the transition from high school to college for first-generation college students by creating a five-week program to educate these students on expectations of their collegiate experience. Additionally this project would include workshops on services and opportunities available such as financial aid and campus life. The goal of this project is to decrease institutional departure of first-generation college students by increasing their knowledge of collegiate life.

Methodology

The study began with a comprehensive review of the literature in order to inform the study on up-to-date theory, practice, and curriculum surrounding first-generation college students and the needs of these students at various times during their collegiate experience. Vincent Tinto's 1975 Theory of Institutional Departure, and several other authors who are knowledgeable about first-generation college students and their unique needs, informed this creative project. A review of several universities' first-generation

college student programs, which included peer and faculty mentorship programs, summer bridge programs, and educational offices was conducted. Additionally, contact was made with several universities in order to obtain additional research and best practices. All materials obtained were used as reference material.

Design of Project

This project is designed to be run through a campus admissions office, in conjunction with other campus offices and services. The project is designed for a college campus with a large population of incoming first-generation college students, that are located within the surrounding geographic areas of the university. Promotion for the program would be done in addition with general university admissions practices. Those who identify as first-generation college students could have the option to sign-up with the office when accepting admission into the university. The admissions office would also send out promotional flyers to the schools close to the university, in order to market the seminar (Appendix E). The seminar would be conducted on the university campus.

Workshop Series

This project consists of a five-part seminar, to be conducted after college admission has been granted, but prior to college entrance. The program would take place once a week for five weeks, for approximately one to one and a half hours per session. The first session would include a panel discussion conducted by current students and faculty members, who are also first-generation college students. This session would also be open to parents and guardians, with the goal of giving both the first-generation college student and parent/guardian a better idea of what to expect of their collegiate experience.

The second session centers on financial aid and scholarships available for students. This includes local, state, and national scholarships, in addition to university, federal, and state based aid and loan programs. Representatives from the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid will be present to answer any questions students may have, as well as provide them with an idea of what the student can expect to pay over their collegiate experience.

The third session will be spent examining the different career and major options available to students at the university. The goal of this session is to both aid those who are undecided in selecting a major, and those who have already chosen a major to solidify their choice. Staff members from the Career Center will be present to provide career choice testing and exploration. Students will also have the opportunity to hear from professors about what they can expect from collegiate classes.

The fourth session involves informing first-generation college students on services that are available to them on campus. An overview of several offices, including Disabled Student Development, the Multicultural Center, Housing and Residence Life, Academic Advising, Campus Tutoring, and Study Abroad, will be presented in order to educate students on what is available to them while at the university. The participants will have the chance to visit with staff from these offices during this session.

The fifth and final session will introduce students to campus life, and the opportunities for experiential learning opportunities. A panel of student leaders will be assembled to discuss the importance of out-of-class learning opportunities, and to speak to the class work/life balance. An overview of campus clubs and organizations will be

presented in order to give students an idea of what they could be involved in during their collegiate time.

Faculty Mentorship Program

A faculty mentorship program will be conducted in order to connect students to faculty members at the universities (Appendix A). The goal is to not only allow students to make faculty connections, but to also encourage them to be actively engaged with professors throughout their collegiate career. The faculty will be introduced to students during the course of the workshop series, but they will be involved with students through the course of their transition and throughout their freshmen year.

Summary

This five-week workshop series is for a program to increase the collegiate knowledge and expectations for first-generation college students. Each session is meant to be interactive and educational, incorporating both lecture and hands on activities. Several offices will collaborate in this program in order to give first-generation college students a comprehensive overview of campus life and services available. Sessions are centered around five topics, which include Collegiate Expectations, Financial Aid and Scholarships, Major/Career Expectations, Campus Services, and Campus Life. At the end of this program students will have increased expectations about their college experience, thus closing the gap between their traditional peers.

CHAPTER FOUR

CREATING A TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

Project Summary

First-generation college students often experiences greater challenges than first-generation students when transitioning from high school to college when compared to their traditional peers. Much of the research conducted on first-generation college student points out the differences between their traditional peers, and disadvantages they are at by being the first in their family to attend a college or university. Much of the difficulties faced by this group of students are centered on their lack of collegiate expectations when entering college, which can inhibit their chances of persisting to graduation.

As the population of first-generation college students grows, institutions of higher education are stepping up to meet their specific challenges and needs. Several types of support programs and departments have been put in place on various campuses to aid in the transition to college, and to provide resources to this group of students throughout their collegiate career. The following program was created to fill an un-aided gap in the transition time line. The following five-week workshop will take place in the spring semester before entering college, post being accepted into the institution. Included is a workshop, as well as a faculty mentorship program, that seeks to give first-generation

college students a strong set of expectations and information about the collegiate experience.

The project consists of the following items:

- Session 1, Collegiate Expectations and First-Generation College Student Panel, page 21.
- Session 2, Financial Aid and Scholarships, page 23.
- Session 3, Major and Career Exploration, page 25.
- Session 4, Campus Services, page 27.
- Session 5, Campus Life, page 29.

Workshop Series Outlines

Session 1

Collegiate Expectations and First-Generation College Student Panel

Learning Objectives:

The purpose of the “College Expectations” workshop is to:

- Educate incoming first-generation college students on what to expect from various aspects of their collegiate experience.
- Educate students on expectations and policies for the remaining workshops.

As a result of participating in this workshop, incoming students and their families will:

- Increase their knowledge about the collegiate experience.
- Engage with current students who were the first in their families to go to college.

Session Outline:

Introduction (30 minutes)

- Introduce staff, students, and families and give outline of the session.
- Pre-assessment (Appendix B) will be conducted to benchmark student learning.
- Ice breaker for staff and students (Appendix C).

Student Panel (50 minutes)

- Staff will provide 30 minutes of predetermined questions, and act as a moderator (Appendix D).
- 20 minutes will be left for students to ask questions to student panel.

Wrap-up/Closing (10 minutes)

- Final questions from parents and students about expectations, agenda, etc.

- Reminders for next week including time, location, etc.

Session 2

Financial Aid and Scholarships

Learning Objectives:

The purpose of the “Financial Aid and Scholarships” workshop is to:

- Educate students on university scholarship opportunities.
- Prepare students to search for outside scholarships that are available.
- Introduce students to the FAFSA process and guidelines.
- Educate students on various types of loans available to them.
- Give student an understanding of their financial responsibilities.

As a result of participating in this workshop, incoming students will:

- Be prepared to search for both need and merit based aid.
- Understand various loan types available from multiple sources.
- Be prepared to begin the FAFSA process.
- Understand what financial situation they are facing.

Session Outline:

Welcome Back (20 minutes)

- Provide a quick re-introduction and icebreaker (Appendix C).

Scholarship/Financial Aid Presentation (45 minutes)

- Representative from the Scholarship/Financial Aid Office will present on their office, types of aid and loans, etc.

Closing/Individual Meetings

- Break group and allow for one on one meetings with the Scholarship and Financial Aid staff representatives.

Session 3

Major and Career Exploration

Learning Objectives:

The purpose of the “Major and Career Exploration” workshop is to:

- Introduce students to major and minor options available to them.
- Explore academic and career areas of interest.
- Provide career testing and information.

As a result of participating in this workshop, incoming students will:

- Learn about the Career Center and the services provided.
- Have a greater idea of their intended major/career choice.
- Be more solidified in their major/career choice.
- Understand what major/career opportunities are available.

Session Outline:

Welcome Back (10 minutes)

- Introduction of guests and overview of the evening.

Major and Minor Opportunities (20 minutes)

- A comprehensive overview of major and minor opportunities will be presented to students.
- An introduction to colleges will be provided.
- Services for undecided students will be presented.

Career Center Presentation (40 minutes)

- Discussion of Career Center services will be presented.
- Students will be lead through the MBTI Career Assessment and be provided with resources on how to connect that to a future career.
 - Assessment is provided online from <http://www.im.org/Meetings/Past/2007/Documents/2007%20APDIM%20Chief%20Residents%20Meeting/Plenary%20Session%20V,%20MBTI%20Personality%20Type%20Test.pdf>

Closing (10 minutes)

- Debriefing of tonight's session and reminders for the following week will be presented.

Session 4

Campus Services

Learning Objectives:

The purpose of the “Campus Services” workshop is to:

- Connect students with relevant campus offices and departments.
- Assist with any required registrations (i.e., Housing and Residence Life).
- Introduce students to important campus services.
- Introduce students to their faculty mentor.

As a result of participating in this workshop, incoming students will:

- Learn what services are available through various campus departments.
- Be registered for important campus services.

Session Outline:

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Welcome back and overview of the evening.

Introduction of Faculty Mentors (20 minutes)

- Students will meet with their assigned faculty mentor and spend some time getting to know each other.

Campus Services Introduction (20 minutes)

- Campus offices and departments in attendance will have a few minutes to introduce their office and to speak on the services their office provides.

Campus Services Fair (30 minutes)

- Offices will have tables set-up and have the opportunity to bring any materials, paperwork, or giveaways for students.
- Students will be able to walk around to each of the tables and learn more about the individual office or fill out any necessary paperwork.

Closing (10 minutes)

- Evening wrap up and final questions.
- Reminders for next session will be provided.

Session 5

Campus Life

Learning Objectives:

- Introduce incoming students to campus life involvement opportunities.
- Connect incoming students with student leaders.
- Educate students on the importance of campus involvement.

As a result of participating in this workshop, incoming students will:

- Learn what involvement opportunities are available on campus.
- Understand how to join or be involved in various clubs and organizations.
- Engage with current campus leaders.

Session Outline:

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Introductions of student leaders and overview of the evening.

Campus Life Presentation (20 minutes)

- Overview of campus life opportunities will be presented.
- Relevant involvement offices and departments, as well as ways to join will be discussed.

Student Leader Panel (40 minutes)

- Staff member will lead 20 minutes of predetermined questions with the panel (Appendix D).
- 20 minutes will be left for students to ask questions to the student leaders panel.

Closing

- Seminar debriefing to be lead by staff member. Discuss what students learned, how they feel their expectations have grown, etc.
- Post-assessment (Appendix B) to be distributed and collected as students are leaving

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APPENDIX A
FACULTY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Faculty Mentorship Agreement Form

First-generation College Student Mentorship Agreement

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the First-generation College Student Seminar as a faculty mentor. We appreciate the time you are putting in to mentor and aid students outside of the classroom. Below is a list of expectations associated with this program. Please sign and return to <insert address> no later than <insert date>.

Expectations

1. As a faculty mentor, you agree to mentor and aid no more than two students beginning after admission has been granted, and through the course of their transition to college.
2. You are required to attend a brief introduction session on <insert date>. This will be a brief meet-and-greet as a part of the first-generation college student seminar.
3. Throughout the course of the student's freshmen year, you are asked to meet with your student at least once a month.
 - a. The purpose of these meetings may include time management counseling, extracurricular engagement opportunities, or whatever the needs of the individual student may be.
4. You agree to follow up with each student via email or phone at least once a month.
5. If the student is failing to communicate with you, you will report it to our office at <insert number>, or by email at <insert email>.

By signing this form, you agree to uphold the expectations listed throughout the course of the <insert year> academic year.

Signature

Name (Printed)

Department

Please return to <insert name> at <insert office address>, or you may scan and email it to <insert email address>.

Email – Faculty Mentors

Dear <insert name>,

My name is <insert name> and I work for <insert university>. We are currently reaching out to faculty members in your department to participate in a faculty mentorship program, as part of a seminar for first-generation college students. This seminar is for students who are the first in their family to attend college and have already been admitted to the university.

Through this five-week workshop, incoming students would have the opportunity to learn more about campus services and opportunities, while being connected to faculty, staff, and students. Attached to this email you will find an agenda, which contains descriptions of each seminar session. As a mentor, you would be asked to participate in one of the sessions, and then follow up with your student(s) through out the next year.

If interested, please respond to this email or call our office at <insert phone number>. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

We appreciate your consideration!

Sincerely,
<insert name>

APPENDIX B
ASSESSMENT MATERIALS

Pre-Assessment

Please complete the following assessment, and turn it in up front. Your answers will allow us to better serve the needs and interests of the students involved. Thank you!

1. What expectations do you hold about college?

2. What feelings do you hold about coming to college?

3. What worries or fears do you have about going to college?

4. Do you feel you have a clear idea of your career path, and major opportunities?
Why or why not?

5. What services on campus are you most interested in learning about?

6. What do you think you are going to need the most help with when transitioning to college?

7. What involvement opportunities are you looking for outside of the classroom?

Post-Assessment

Please complete the following assessment, and turn it in up front. Your answers will allow us to better serve the needs and interests of the students involved. Thank you!

1. What expectations do you now hold about college?

2. What feelings do you hold about coming to college?

3. What worries or fears do you have about going to college?

4. Do you feel you have a clear idea of your career path, and major opportunities?
Why or why not?

5. What services on campus are you most interested in using? Why?

6. What do you think you are going to need the most help with when transitioning to college?

7. What involvement opportunities are you looking for outside of the classroom?

8. Do you feel you have a clearer understanding of what to expect going into college? Why or why not?
9. Do you feel more prepared to handle your transition to college? Why or why not?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share to help us make this experience better for future students?

APPENDIX C
ICE BREAKERS

Ice Breaker – Session 1

Name Tag Switch

Upon arrival, pass out nametags to each individual, making sure that they receive a nametag that does not belong to themselves. When designated, students must walk around the room introducing themselves to other individuals. During each first encounter, they must first ask them a “get to know you” type question, before asking them their name.

Questions may include:

- What are you planning on studying?
- Do you have any summer plans?
- What is your most memorable high school memory?
- What clubs do you want to join next year?

When participants have found the correct name, they may sit down until all the other nametags have been matched up.

Adapted from <http://www.western.edu/student-life/orientation/orientation-leaders/orientation-leader-resources/Ice%20Breaker%20Ideas%20for%20Leaders.pdf/view>

Ice Breaker – Session 2

Questions

The goal of this icebreaker is to introduce students to one another, while also being able to get their questions answered.

1. Pass out a piece of paper and a marker to each student upon arrival.
2. Instruct them to write their name, and a question on their piece of paper.
3. Everyone will go around in a circle, state their name, and then their question.
4. Once everyone is done, students will tape their piece of paper on the wall.
5. Students can write the answers to other questions throughout the night.
6. At the end of the evening students are free to take their original question home with them.

APPENDIX D

STUDENT PANEL QUESTIONS

Student Panel Questions – Session 1

1. Please tell us your name, where you're from, and what you are currently studying.
2. What challenges did you face when making the transition to college?
3. What services on campus did/do you utilize?
4. How did you discover ways to manage your time, and deal with balancing class, work, extra-curricular activities, etc.?
5. What were your expectations about your collegiate experience going into college, and how were those met or not met?
6. If you could go back in time, what advice would you give to your parents while you were going through your transition to college?
7. What advice would you give to those who are seeking scholarships, or needing to obtain loans?
8. What obstacles were the most challenging when trying to make friends, and what support networks did you rely on?
9. How did you handle the difference in academic requirements?
10. What is the most important piece of advice you could give to fellow first-generation college students?

Student Leader Questions – Session 5

1. Please tell us your name, where you're from, and what you are currently studying.
2. What activities are you/have you been involved in since coming to college?
3. What or who helped you get involved?
4. What do you feel you have learned from being involved outside of the classroom?
5. What are some of the benefits you have gained from being involved outside of the classroom?
6. What opportunities for service are available on campus?
7. Why do you feel it is important to be involved on campus?
8. What departments or offices on campus do you go to to find ways to be involved?

APPENDIX E

PRE -PROGRAM CORRESPONDENCE

Email – Participant Sign-up

Dear <insert name>,

Congratulations on your acceptance to <university name>! We are so excited that you have decided to join us, and can't wait to have you here on campus. We know that you will be a great addition to our university.

On your application, you listed that you were a first-generation college student. We would like to extend an invitation to you to participate in a special workshop for incoming freshmen that are the first in their family to attend college. Through this five-week workshop, you would have the opportunity to learn more about campus services and opportunities, while being connected to faculty, staff, and students. Attached to this email you will find an agenda, which contains descriptions of each seminar session.

This workshop will take place on campus <insert beginning and ending dates>. The workshop is free and will last approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours per session. Additionally, there is a faculty mentorship program associated with this seminar, through which you will be paired with a faculty member closely associated with your intended major.

To sign up, you may respond to this email or call our office at <insert phone number>. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,
<insert name>

Email – Parents of Registered Students

Dear <insert parent/guardian name>,

My name is <insert name> and I am currently working with the <insert office name>. Your son or daughter has decided to register for our first-generation college student seminar. We are excited to have them attend, and would like to extend an invitation for you to join us on <insert date>, where we will provide an overview of the five-week seminar and a panel of current first-generation college students enrolled at our school.

Attached you will find an agenda with descriptions of each weeks activities. If you would like to attend on <insert date> for our first session, please RSVP to <insert email> no later than <insert date>.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call or email us at the information listed below.

Sincerely,

<insert name>

<insert contact information>

Email – High School Guidance Counselors

Dear <insert name>,

My name is <insert name> and I work for <insert university>. We are currently reaching out to area high schools in hopes of identifying students that might benefit from a seminar for first-generation college students. This seminar is for students who are the first in their family to attend college and have already been admitted to the university.

Through this five-week workshop, incoming students would have the opportunity to learn more about campus services and opportunities, while being connected to faculty, staff, and students. Attached to this email you will find an agenda, which contains descriptions of each seminar session.

This workshop will take place on campus <insert beginning and ending dates>. The workshop is free and will last approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours per session. Additionally, there is a faculty mentorship program associated with this seminar, through which students will be paired with a faculty member closely associated with their intended major.

To sign up, interested students may respond to this email or call our office at <insert phone number>. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

We appreciate your help identifying candidates!

Sincerely,
<insert name>

Email – Campus Departments and Offices Invitations

Dear <insert parent/guardian name>,

My name is <insert name> and I am currently working with the <insert office name>. Our office is in the process of planning a seminar for first-generation college students, and would like to have your office participate on <insert date> for a session over <insert topic>.

<insert specific office details and requirements>

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to helping serve our students. Please RSVP to this email no later than <insert date>. Technology and table requirements should be included in your RSVP. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call or email us at the information listed below.

Sincerely,

<insert name>

<insert contact information>